

SPARE MOMENTS.

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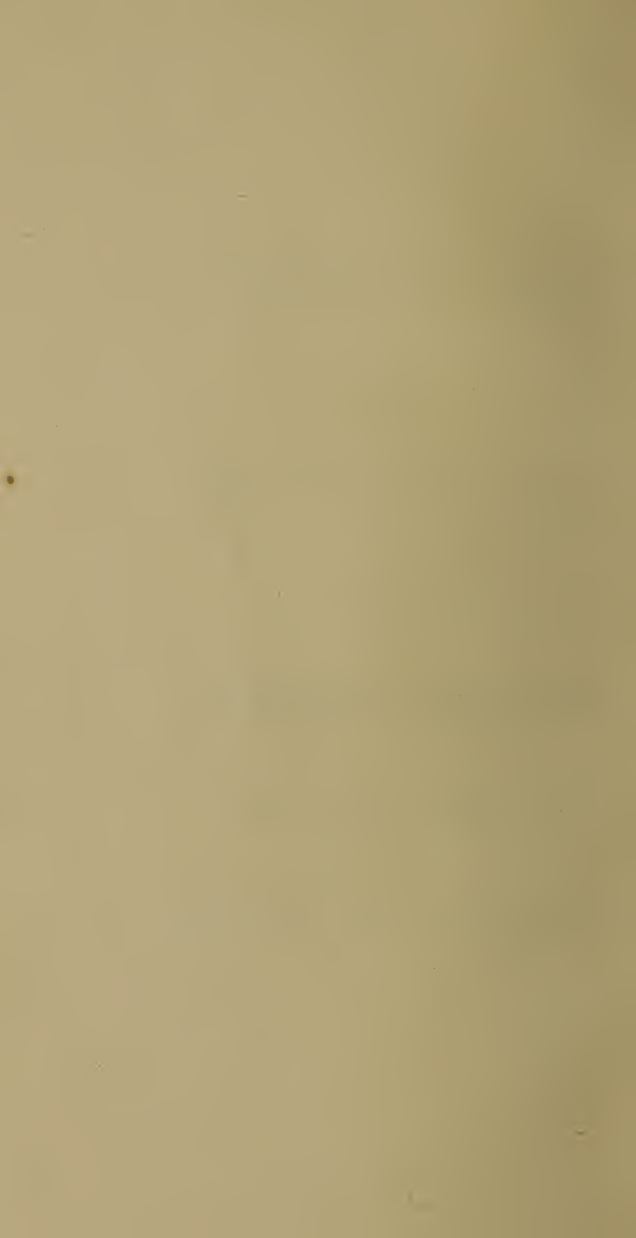
A LITTLE BOOK OF POEMS

WRITTEN BY

→*ELIZABETH*✦DARLING,*←

AND DEDICATED WITH LOVE TO

Her Husband, David Darling.



PREFACE.

This little book was never meant
For critics' eyes to see,
But for dear friends who will approve
Because 'twas written by me.

I N collecting and publishing this little Book of Poems, I wish to say that I have done so, not because of any particular merit they possess, but more to please my very near friends. Nearly all the subjects are sacred ones to me, and the ideas are my own. A few of them were written years ago, when I was quite young, and the rest have been written within the last few months. Three or four of the pieces have already appeared in print. Let those who condemn just try it, and they will find it not very easy to write even poor poetry. But if I succeed in pleasing those for whom they are intended, I shall be satisfied.

ELIZABETH DARLING.

❖❖SPARE❖❖MOMENTS.❖❖

A PICTURE.

'TIS evening, and the hearth is swept.
The room is neat and clean,
And clustering around the fire
Nine children may be seen.

Maggie, the eldest, reads aloud,
A story from a book,
The mother in her easy chair
Smiles on with happy look,

And when the story is ended
There are questions to be asked,
And Mac cries "Read another, please,"
And thus the evening passed.

Until the old clock strikes nine,
And the little ones put to rest,
Then the quiet talk of older ones,
Of all is far the best.

'Tis then the mother warns her sons,
From honor to never depart,
And tells her girls there's naught becomes
Like an humble and lowly heart.

And when in after years they've grown
To men and women brave,
The influence of that quiet home
May them from ruin save.

TO MY MOTHER.

O H! the blessed name of mother,
How it, thrills me through and through,
Thrills me softly, as no other
Name in this wide world can do.
Dear to me is she who bears it,
And I love to sing her praise ;
Ah! how much we owe our mothers
For love and care in early days.

Often in the silent hours
When I, weary, cannot sleep,
Thoughts of mother, stealing o'er me,
Bring a sense of sweet relief.
Thoughts of her will cheer and comfort,
Often when I suffer pain,
And I think that her dear presence
Could almost make me well again.

When I hear from lips of children,
Shouts of mother o'er and o'er,
All my worldly cares fly from me,
And I am a child once more,
Roaming o'er the hills for berries,
Ever happy in those days ;
Could I always fill my basket,
And secure my mother's praise.

Oh, my mother ! how I love thee !
Could I live my life again,
Hasty word nor act of mine,
Should never, never, cause you pain ;
This I would have you remember,
The good seed that you have sown
Never has been quite forgotten,
But has taken root and grown.

If I could then, now most gladly
Would I all your burdens bear,
But that they be light and easy
Still shall be your daughter's prayer.
And if I should not grow stronger,
Nor regain my health once more,
We have this blest hope to cheer us,
We may meet on Canaan's shore.

TO MY FATHER.

MY dear, dear father, though your locks
Grow white as years roll by,
I do not see that time has dimmed
The brightness of your eye,
Nor robbed you of your cheery voice,
Your genial, friendly ways ;
You've still a pleasant word for all,
As in the olden days.

The olden days—how long ago !
And yet how short years seem ;
They fly so quickly, life to us
Is almost like a dream.
But still how many changes
Have taken place since then ;
Your girls have grown to womanhood,
Your boys to stalwart men.

And you and mother both are here,
To see your flock of nine,
Unbroken by the hand of death,
Still spared by power divine.
And unto them are added
Three sons and daughter, too,
And six dear little children,
Who shout "Grandpa" after you.

All these are changes years have brought,
And yet you seem to be
Almost as young as when a child
I played about your knee.
Be sure of this, dear father,
Your children love you well,
And should a time to prove it come,
By acts our love we'll tell.

And long I trust may you be spared
To those who love you here,
To give us all your counsel sage,
To comfort and to cheer.
And when we all have passed away
From scenes of earthly love,
God grant we may united be
One band in heaven above.

OUR LITTLE GRACIE.

WE have a dear little girlie,
Just two years old and a half;
I am sure you would think her older
Could you hear her wise little laugh.

She is none of your dear little fairies,
With blue eyes and flaxen hair,
Dressed up with sashes and laces,
To help to make her more fair.

But she is a plump little lassie,
With a merry round laughing face,
A sweet little mouth, and very small nose,
That is constantly out of its place.

She's too fat to wear sashes or flounces,
So we dress her quite plainly, you see,
And if she don't look well to others,
She's as sweet to her father and me.

She tells me, I must be the grandma,
'Cause she is the mama, you know,
And that I must mind her baby,
For she up street must go.

She takes three turns round the table,
Then demurely comes back to my side,
And says if babe were a good boy,
She would take him out for a ride.

She wants to help Susan wash dishes,
And the table she tries to set ;
She is no sooner out of one mischief,
Than into another she'll get.

Sometimes she is naughty and has to be whipped
Before she will do what is right,
But in a few moments she comes back to me
And says, "Mamma, I love you tight."

Long may she be spared, this dear little girl,
To fill all the house with mirth,
And as years pass may she still be
The best little girl on the earth.

BELLA.

(Written by Request.)

MERRY little laughing maiden,
With bright and sparkling eyes,
And rosy lips just made for kisses,
Fairest sight beneath the skies ;
Constant joy of her kind parents,
Who for her so much would do ;
Loved by grandma, aunties, cousins,
And a host of others too.

Now 'tis for this little maiden
I an earnest wish would give :
May our Heavenly Father bless her
Every hour and day she lives.
May her life be long and happy,
May she know but little care,
May she find the pearl of price
That is far beyond compare.

As years pass by and she grows older,
May it be a pleasant task
To be, to Father and to Mother,
All that they could wish or ask.
All these things I wish for Bella—
More, I trust, that in the end,
She may have a home in heaven
And Jesus always for a friend.

A MOTHER'S PRAYER.

HEAVENLY Father, bless my children.
I resign them to thy care ;
May they ever fear and love thee.
Is a mother's earnest prayer.

Keep my boy from sin and folly,
Guide him in the narrow way ;
May he early learn to love thee,
Early learn to watch and pray.

Father, if thou spare my daughter,
Lead her in the paths of truth ;
May she know the love of Jesus
In the early days of youth.

Not alone for these, my loved ones,
Would I offer up a prayer,
Send a shower of heavenly blessing
On the children everywhere.

A PLEASANT MEMORY.

I STOOD one evening, in early autumn, on a point of land stretching into Charleston Lake, known as Bradley's Point. My father, my mother, my sisters and brothers, myself and two children, had been out for a little picnic. We had been busy with our tea, so for a time the beauty of the surrounding scenery was lost upon us. But when we arose to go to the boat to return home, the quaint grandeur of it all burst upon us at once, and we exclaimed, almost with one voice, "How beautiful!" I think that I enjoyed it more than the others, for I stood a long time gazing in silent admiration. The lake, as far as the eye could see, was perfectly calm; not a ripple appeared to mar its beauty. The sun, just sinking to rest, threw his last slanting rays across, making silvery streaks over the water, and colouring the green trees that lined the shores, making them appear all colours. Then there were the islands, grand in their rustic beauty. The hand of man has not yet robbed them of their picturesque appearance. Then there were the frame houses upon the opposite shore, which we could just see, and the old Blue Mountain frowning in the distance. All these combined made a rare picture, and one that was so impressed upon me at the time that I think I shall never forget it. It filled my heart with love and respect for Him whose hand had formed it—for Him who doeth all things well.

BY THE LAKE.

(Suggested by a Picture.)

I 'VE wandered down by the lake as of old,
I have sat on the same mossy bank,
I've plucked the wild flowers that grew by its side,
And of its cold waters I've drank ;
I have gazed around in the old startled way,
Expecting to hear my own name,
Or see through the bushes the tall manly form
Of him who was ever the same.

I've read the same books that together we read,
I have thought o'er the plans we drew,
And deep in my heart are the words he said
Of the love that would ever prove true ;
But these memories sadden my heart to-day,
And bring naught of gladness to me,
For the years are so many since last we sat
Together beneath this tree.

For death came and took him and I am left
To finish my journey alone,
With no joys save the memories of by-gone years.
And the hope of last going home—
To that better home where the weary rest.
Where the aching heart finds peace,
Where there is no more trouble or sorrow,
But where our joys ever increase.

So I rose from the bank with a weary sigh
As I gave one last look around,
And I think how strange such grief should be
Where so much beauty abounds ;
And I leave the spot with slow, sad steps,
Still musing about the past.
Ah me ! it is over, and now I know
Our joy was too great to last.

AUTUMN.

ALL hail, thou glorious Autumn !
Of all four seasons best,
With pleasure great we greet thee,
Now Summer is laid to rest.

'Tis now the earth puts on her robes
Of gorgeous colours bright ;
The beauty of the silent woods
Would shame the stars of night.

Each tree is dressed in varied hues
That once were leaves of green,
And scattered o'er the ground are they
In careless beauty seen.

And as I tread the winding path
That leads me o'er the hill,
I gaze around with wonder
And admiration still.

For wheresoere I turn my eye
Thy charms burst on my sight ;
No painter can thy charms portray,
Nor pen thy praises write.

From thee we learn this lesson :
Each year, as you come and go,
That we have spent another year
Either for weal or woe.

Then farewell glorious Autumn,
Too soon will thou be past,
Too soon will thy beauty vanish
Before Winter's chilling blast.

WRITTEN FOR MAC'S ALBUM.

I DO not ask that life's rough storms
Should never break o'er thee,
Or that thy path through flowery beds
Of ease should ever be.
But this I ask, that unto you
A heart of grace be given,
To help you bear all trials here
And make you fit for Heaven.

MY WISH FOR NELLIE.

I WISH for you that peace of mind
Which Christians here possess,
A home in heaven when life is o'er,
Where all is happiness.

AN ACROSTIC.

BRANDY causes untold woe,
Reason going sure but slow ;
All we have of this world's wealth,
Nothing left, not even health.
Do not venture near the snare ;
You are warned, so now beware.

GRUMBLING.

MY evenings all I spend alone,
With no society except my own ;
And though my thoughts may not be right,
I'll put them down for very spite.

My little ones at seven retire,
When I sit moody by the fire,
And thus it is week in, week out,
And often I do naught but pout.

My husband, though the best of men,
Never gets in till half-past ten ;
He's drove with business, so you see
He has no time to spend with me.

There are many not so young as I,
Whom I often hear go laughing by,
To skating rink or social gay,
While I'm obliged at home to stay.

Ah me ! it was not always so ;
When I was young I used to go,
But now, because I am a wife,
I'm forced to lead this humdrum life.

What would I give for one kind friend,
Who would drop in, an hour to spend,
And drive away, with pleasant chat,
The pouts, the blues, and all of that.

Of course I have my work to do,
Stockings to knit, and patching too ;
But one wants something more than this—
Constant work is not all bliss.

Now since I've got my grumbling done,
I am almost sorry I begun ;
And though, perhaps, no one's to blame,
It is not pleasant, all the same.

ADVICE TO THE GIRLS.

L AUGH away,
L Maiden gay,
There'll be time enough for sorrow ;
But mind, I say,
Don't do to-day
What you'll be sorry for to-morrow.

There will be care
For you to bear,
After you are tired of sporting :
But mind, I say,
'Twill never pay
To waste your best years in flirting.

But when at last
The years go past,
And you are twenty years or over,
Nay, do not frown,
But settle down,
And be content with one true-lover.

'Tis better far,
A family jar,
Occasionally about household matters,
Than to flirt so gay
The years away,
Then find your heart is all tatters.

A good man's love
Is far above
Whatever else this world can give :
So don't delay,
But name the day,
And both be happy while you live.

WRITTEN

Upon Receiving a Letter from a Friend.

[TO-NIGHT received your letter,
Your very, very welcome letter ;
'Twas a source of joy to me,
Full of comfort as could be.

How I read each word with interest,
Each line with fresh awakened interest ;
And every time I read it o'er,
It seemeth better than before.

While I read I am young again ;
You and I are young again,
And in fancy I travel back
Over memories' beaten track.

Now it brings again to mind,
Pleasant scenes again to mind,
Of when we both were young and gay,
When no clouds obscured our way.

And although I've made new friends,
You alone of all old friends
Seem more true than all the rest,
And I prize your love the best.

So I thank you for your letter,
Your very, very welcome letter ;
And I trust that you, my friend,
May have blessings without end.

TEMPERANCE AND INTemperance.

TWO pictures—one a cottage home
That peeped through wreaths of green ;
The other a rickety old frame house
That hardly was fit to be seen.
The path that led to the cottage
Was bordered with flowers neat,
While all around the old frame house
Weeds grew rank under your feet.

At the cot there was peace and plenty,
And never a harsh word or blow.
'Twas quite the reverse at the old house—
Poverty, pain and woe.
Now, what made the difference, think you ?
Alas ! you can plainly see
That while one home was ruled by intemperance,
From that curse the other was free.

OUR TEMPLE I.O.G.T.

LET us strive to make our Temple
Shine brightly as a beacon light,
To guide wretched men and women
From the darkness to the light.

Let no trifles bar our progress
In the work we have to do ;
Still progressing, still achieving,
God will kindly guide us through.

In the glorious cause of temperance
Let us strive still more and more,
To reclaim our fallen brothers,
And peace to broken homes bestow.

Then let us all with hearts united
Strive to do each duty well.
And the good that we accomplish
The coming years will tell.

TEMPERANCE.

TEMPERANCE is an inexhaustible theme. There cannot be too much written or said about it.

Everything that can be said has been said again and again; so even if I were clever I could say nothing but what has been said before. But still I feel it my duty to record my sentiments upon the subject here, so that, should my children be spared to read this in after years, they will know what their mother thought about it. I loathe and abhor the very name of intemperance, and I am filled with indignation when I think of men of even ordinary intelligence making a living by dealing out the deadly poison to fathers of families and promising youths. It is a sad, sad sight to see a drunken father staggering home to wife and children, who fear him so much that they huddle together in the farthest corner and keep quiet. Ah, what the poor wretch misses of the sweets of life, did he but know! No wife greets him with a smile upon his return home; no dear little children run to his knee the moment he enters and cover his face with kisses. But he does not care for such things, he is so wrapped up in his bottle; he thinks he needs no other friend. God pity him! But I think it is even worse when we begin to fear that that fine promising young man, upon whom so many high hopes have been built, has begun to tittle—has begun to like his glass. How sad to see that fond mother remain up night after night, wondering why he stays so long, and making all manner of excuses for her boy; and when he does come in with flushed face and unsteady step, never gives him a reproachful word. But her eyes are filled with tears and speak the agony she feels. Young man, do you know what you are doing? You are breaking your mother's heart and ruining your own prospects in life, besides incurring that dreadful sentence that no drunkard can inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. If God should spare my own boy till youth and manhood, and

should he read what his mother has written here, let him never forget that while she writes she is offering a silent prayer to heaven for him that he may ever shun whatever intoxicates ; that he will remember the trouble begins with the first glass, and when others tempt him have courage to say no.

A MAIDEN'S RESOLVE.

I AM sitting to-night on the door-step,
As the shadows gather in,
And thinking of my past life,
So full of folly and sin.
Yes, thinking of my past life,
Though my age is but fifteen years,
And my mind is filled with sadness
And my heart is filled with fears.

All my life I have sought for pleasure,
And given no time to prayer,
And life's every day petty trials
I've had no patience to bear.
I often make good resolutions,
And resolve to begin the next day,
But at the first little annoyance
My good resolves all fly away.

But now as I sit on the door-step,
While the night shadows gather in,
I will make all my promises over again,
And to-night I will begin,
And will ask the kind Father to help me
And give me the grace that I need,
For I know if I try to grow better alone.
I never can hope to succeed.

OUR BABY IN HEAVEN.

WE had thee, darling baby,
But for a little while,
Yet we loved thee very dearly ;
Now we miss thy winning smile.
We miss thy little baby ways,
So dear to mother's heart ;
Ah, baby, thou canst never know
How hard it was to part.

Thy little brother and sister
Speak oftentimes of thee ;
They do not understand, and ask
Questions that puzzle me.
I tell them thou art an angel,
And though we loved thee well,
That Jesus loved thee better,
And took thee home to dwell.

Their childish grief is soon forgot
In childish mirth and play ;
Not so with mother, baby,
Who grieves for thee each day :
My empty arms more empty seem
When ere I think of thee ;
Baby, thy very helplessness
Made thee more dear to me.

And yet I do not wish thee back,
For Jesus knows what's best,
And He for some good reason
Has called thee to thy rest.
Perhaps 'twas meant to teach us
This lesson here below,
That Thou cannot return to us,
But we to Thee must go.

And so I try to not rebel,
But pray to thankful be
That we have one little treasure
Safe for all eternity.
God grant that we be worthy,
When our work below is done,
To find a home in heaven
And meet our little one.

LINES TO A FRIEND.

(Written by Request.)

MY friend, remember though you think
Your burdens hard to bear,
There's not a mortal here below
But too must have his share,
Of hidden griefs he dare not tell,
Of sins and sorrow too ;
Then think not that a greater share
Has been dealt out to you.

But make the least of present griefs,
The most of present joys,
And thankful be you still have left
Your healthy, happy boys.
You live your youth again in theirs,
To guide that so they may
Shun all the rocks you stumbled on
And enter the narrow way.

OUR BABY'S GRAVE.

I LOVE to steal out in the twilight
And go to my baby's grave ;
There a calm sort of feeling steals o'er me
Like the breath of a summer wave,
And my thoughts are always drawn upward
When I sit near the sacred spot,
And dream of my brown-eyed baby—
My babe, thou art not forgot.

Sometimes when the day has been weary
And burdens seemed hard to bear,
I have stolen softly out in the twilight
And offered a silent prayer ;
And at once my burdens grew lighter
When I came to this sacred spot,
And I seemed to get strength to bear them—
My babe, thou art not forgot.

I love to bring flowers in spring time
And water them oft with a tear,
Though I know it is not thy spirit,
But only thy dust lies here.
Still thy spirit seems lingering near me
When I visit this hallowed spot,
And seems to ever point heavenward—
My babe, thou will ne er be forgot.

OLD FRIENDS.

I LOVE to sit by the fire-light before the lamps are
lit, and when the moonlight streams in through
the window, as it does to-night. It is all the more
pleasant. During these leisure moments I love to let
my thoughts take their own course. Sometimes they
are a source of pleasure, at other times a source of
sadness and gloom. But to-night the friends of my
youth seem uppermost in my thoughts, and I find it a

pleasant occupation to think of the past. First there comes to my mind a dear kind lady whom I have known all my life. Our friendship was formed when I was a mere child and used to stay with her for company when she was alone. Our friendship has never lessened, but rather increased with years ; and now when we meet we seem to be nearly the same age, although my children are just prattlers around my knee, while some of hers are men and women. Now I think of another friend, a young lady who was several years older than myself, but whom I loved very much and was hardly happy when out of her society. Well our friendship lasted for years, but at last a cloud arose ; it was but slight, but still enough to mar the friendship of years. I remember yet how badly I felt about it ; how I thought I had my first great sorrow then. Long afterwards, when we were both married women, we visited, but never referred to the past ; still it was not just the same as of old. And I never hear her name mentioned now without a feeling of interest, commingled with sadness that our friendship could not have remained unbroken through life. Somebody says there is no union here of hearts that finds not here an end ; but I think they often find an end much sooner than the poet meant to imply. There is something sad, too, in the contemplation of broken friendships, and I call up a more pleasant scene. A dozen or more names of girls of my own age flit before me. Some of them were schoolmates, with whom I have passed many pleasant hours. But the years have not stood still ; they have rolled around and have brought their changes, and most of those old friends are married women now with families and homes of their own. Some of them have gone with their husbands to the far west, while others have settled near their childhood home ; but a few have gone to their long last home, called hence by the hand of death. But, oh ! how my heart warms towards those that are left, and how I could enjoy an afternoon visit to any one of them, and how much we could find to

talk about. Then there were the Day and Sabbath Schools; I often think about them. At the Day School there were crowds of half-grown children, in whom I took no especial interest years ago, but now when I chance to meet any of them, I am interested at once, as well as surprised, that they are so near man and womanhood. Now, if by any chance I should be far from home and among strangers, and should meet any of those half-grown boys or girls of long ago, how glad I should be; how many questions there would be to ask and to answer. How sorry to part and how pleased to meet again! the simple fact of having attended the same school together being a sufficient guarantee for our friendship. Then the Sabbath School was a great source of pleasure to me. How much I enjoyed it I shall never forget; and I feel that the influence of an amiable woman there has done me much good through life. I am sure her influence must have been felt by many others as well as myself. Long may she live, and may her influence be felt for good for years to come! There are a great many others whom I used to like and whom it would be a great pleasure to meet. In fact, if I had an enemy in those days, I did not know it; so if I had enemies, they did me no harm. Of course I have made many new friends, a few of them very dear to me; but still they have not crowded out the old ones. There is still a green spot in my memory for all.

Good night, my dear old friends,
The words I say are true;
There's still a warm spot in my heart
For each and all of you.



